

The Naturalization Test

What to Expect on the Naturalization Test

During the course of the naturalization process, an applicant for United States citizenship will be scheduled for an interview at a local United States Citizenship and Immigration Services office. At the interview, the applicant will be tested on his or her ability to read, write, and speak English, and will also be given a civics test to measure his or her understanding and knowledge of United States history and government.

Note: Some applicants may be exempt from all or part of the testing process due to their age or mental condition.

Language Test

The English proficiency test demonstrates that the applicant will be able to take part in the economic and social aspects of life in the United States. The test has three parts:

Reading: To test reading ability, an applicant may be asked to read out loud certain parts of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.

Writing: To test writing ability, an applicant will be asked to write one or two simple sentences.

Speaking: An applicant's speaking ability will be tested when the applicant answers questions about himself or herself during the course of the interview.

The applicant need not be bilingual to pass this test; basic proficiency is adequate. If you have problems with English, you may want to consider taking an English as a Second Language course prior to naturalization.

Civics Test

The civics test covers basic United States history and knowledge of government. Applicants may receive a waiver if they have a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that impacts their capacity to learn and/or understand the relevant information. Additionally, applicants who have been living in the United States legally for over twenty years, and who are over 65, may receive special consideration on this test.

Examples of civics questions:

Q: What are the first 10 amendments to the Constitution called?

A: The Bill of Rights.

Q: In what month is the new President of the United States inaugurated?

A: January.

Q: Who elects Congress?

A: The citizens of the United States.

Failing a Test

If an applicant fails one or both of the tests, a second appointment will be scheduled, usually within 60-90 days of the first interview. The applicant will be retested at that second interview. If the applicant fails the test for a second time, his or her application for naturalization will be denied.